

La Petite Gemme Prairie Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2015-2024



Battson Warren
Wildlife Division Chief

9/3/15
Date

La Petite Gemme Prairie Conservation Area Management Plan Approval Page

PLANNING TEAM

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Jean Mayer, Outdoor Skills Specialist

SOUTHWEST REGION

RCT Chair


Signature

8/17/15
Date

WILDLIFE DIVISION

Management Chief


Signature

8/27/2015
Date

OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** La Petite Gemme Prairie Conservation Area, #7723
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1974 (Owned by Missouri Prairie Foundation; managed by Missouri Department of Conservation through an agreement since 1977)
- **Acreage:** 37 acres
- **County:** Polk
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife Division
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife Division
- **Statement of Purpose:**
 - A. Strategic Direction**

Manage La Petite Gemme Prairie Conservation Area (CA) for a diverse suite of native prairie plants and animals using a variety of grassland management tools.
 - B. Desired Future Condition**

The desired future condition is a functional native prairie community that meets the resource needs of a variety of grassland plant and animal species.
 - C. Federal Aid Statement**

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

- I. Special Considerations**
 - A. Priority Areas:** None
 - B. Natural Areas:** Yes, the entire conservation area is La Petite Gemme Prairie Natural Area. This area was nominated as a Natural Area due to its high diversity, high quality plant community.
- II. Important Natural Features and Resources**
 - A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
 - B. Caves:** None
 - C. Springs:** None
- III. Existing Infrastructure**
 - One parking lot
- IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations**
 - A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** La Petite Gemme Prairie is owned by the Missouri Prairie Foundation. The Missouri Department of

Conservation (the Department) manages the area under an unlimited timeframe cooperative agreement with the Missouri Prairie Foundation that was initiated in 1977.

- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** The Ozark Greenway's Frisco Highline Trail (a hiking/biking trail) bisects the area.
- D. Cultural Resource Findings:** No known cultural resources.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** Endangered Species are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Management centers on maintaining and enhancing the native prairie community. Native prairie is one of the rarest natural communities in Missouri. Priority will be placed on preventing degradation and maintaining biotic diversity using approved management tools and practices.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Control exotic species.
- 2) Manage woody vegetation.

Management Objective 1: Maintain or increase vegetative diversity and ecosystem functionality of these native grasslands and provide critical habitat for grassland-dependent fauna.

Strategy 1: Native shrubs may be allowed to develop, but will be kept at or below a maximum of 1 percent of the area and will be kept less than 15 feet in height. Tree species will be eliminated as necessary. (Wildlife).

Strategy 2: Maintain a prescribed burn frequency to provide grassland bird brood rearing habitat, stimulate forbs and increase plant diversity (Wildlife).

Strategy 3: Reduce exotic species without negatively impacting native grasses and forbs (Wildlife).

Management Objective 2: Work with interested adjacent landowners to enhance their properties.

Strategy 1: Inventory all adjoining land to determine current land use (Wildlife, Private Land Services).

Strategy 2: Make contact with landowners that have existing native prairie on their property that could be improved; or work with landowners to address existing exotic or invasive species on their properties that could pose a threat to this natural area. This could also involve working with county road districts to control unwanted invasive species in road rights of way (Wildlife, Private Land Services).

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Aquatic features on this prairie consist of small drainages and headwater streams. One of the stream systems originating on La Petite Gemme Prairie CA has been converted to a grassed waterway just downstream and outside of the area boundary.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage two headwater streams (0.3 total miles).

Management Objective 1: Maintain and/or enhance functionality and quality of headwater streams

Strategy 1: Continue to implement stream best management practices, as outlined in the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (2009) (Wildlife, Fisheries).

Strategy 2: Address channel instability, as needed (Fisheries).

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

La Petite Gemme CA is closed to hunting. The area receives minimal public use. It is mainly used by wildflower enthusiasts in mid-summer. The Frisco Highline Trail is a hiking/biking trail that bisects the conservation area. It is part of the Ozark Greenways trail system, which runs from Bolivar to Springfield, and receives considerable public use throughout the year. Ozark Greenways, Missouri Prairie Foundation and the Department partnered on an informational sign in 2011, which was erected on the south edge of the property, where the Frisco trail enters the prairie.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Increase public awareness and use of these areas.
- 2) Maintain public access to the area.

Management Objective 1: Maintain suitable public access.

Strategy 1: Maintain the parking area in a way that is aesthetically pleasing and inviting to area users (Wildlife).

Management Objective 2: Continue to inform the public of the opportunities at this area.

Strategy 1: Work with local media specialist to highlight area resources in various Department publications and digital media (Outreach and Education, Wildlife).

Strategy 2: Provide information at the area bulletin board and the information sign on the trail, highlighting the uniqueness and value of the resources on the area (Wildlife, Outreach and Education).

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Ensure all easements are properly documented and filed.

Management Objective 1: Make sure all easements are properly filed.

Strategy 1: Use Geographic Information System to ensure that any easements are properly located (Wildlife).

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

La Petite Gemme Prairie CA was purchased in 1977 by the Missouri Prairie Foundation and is now leased to the Department for management. The name refers to the gem-like quality of this small prairie. The area is primarily dry-mesic limestone/dolomite prairie. Scattered knobs are located on the eastern half of the area. A number of seasonal seeps are situated along these rocky knobs and interesting fen plants, like orange coneflower (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), are found in close proximity to glade species, like Missouri blackeyed susan (*Rudbeckia missouriensis*). Areas of hardpan prairie, which are naturally less diverse, are found on the western half of the area. Two small stream branches bisect the area and provide valuable habitat for amphibians.

Legal Description: Township 33 North, Range 23 W, Section 25.

Area Location: La Petite Gemme Prairie Conservation Area is located 1 mile west of Highway 13 on 473rd Road, just south of Bolivar.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Native Prairie	37		100
Stream Frontage		0.3	

Public Input Summary:

The draft La Petite Gemme Prairie Conservation Area Management Plan was available for a public comment period June 1-30, 2015. The Missouri Department of Conservation received no comments during this time.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 1: Area Map

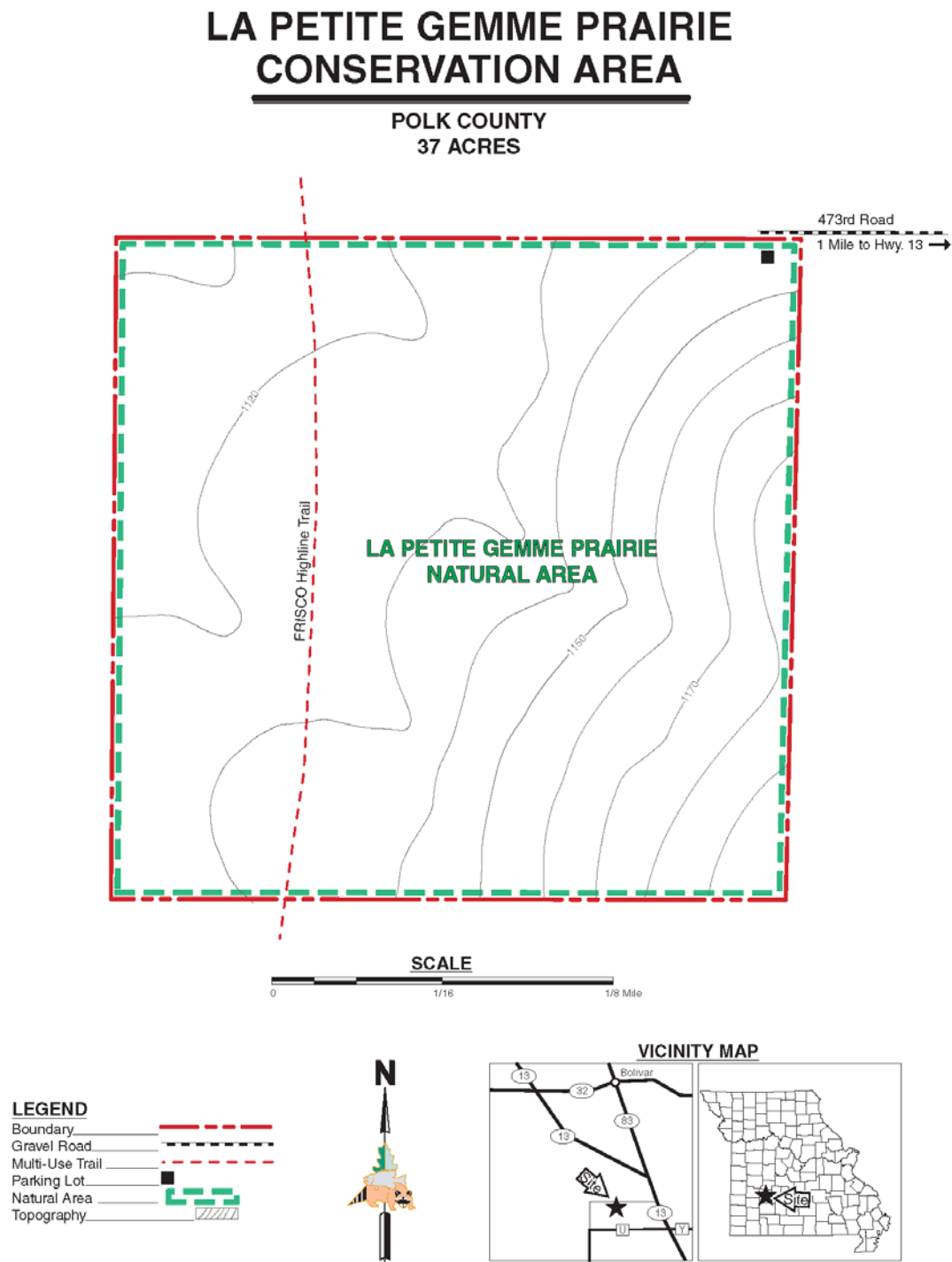


Figure 2: Aerial Map



Figure 3: Topographic Map

